



Rare Plants of Louisiana



Calopogon multiflorus – many-flowered grass-pink Orchid Family (Orchidaceae)

Rarity Ranks: S1/G2G3

Range: AL, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC

Recognition:

- 1) Flowering stems dark purple
- 2) Petals widest above middle
- 3) Flowers open in rapid succession
- 4) Flowers with strong sweet pungent fragrance, while similar species have no or weak fragrance (fragrance stronger on sunny warm days)
- 5) Leaves 1-2 at the base of plant and grass-like to 4" long and up to 0.35" wide while plants are in flower – leaves elongate after flower to up to 1.3' long

Flowering Time: March-May (average is mid April in Louisiana)

Light Requirement: Full sun to part shade

Wetland Status: FACW - usually occurs in wetlands

Habitats: Mesic pine savannahs on flat or gently sloping terrain.

Soils are usually sandy to loamy and acidic. Associates include

longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*), blackjack oak (*Quercus marilandica*), little gallberry/ink berry (*Ilex glabra*), slender

bluestem (*Schizachyrium tenerum*), little bluestem (*S. scoparium*), and savannah meadow beauty (*Rhexia alifanus*).

Range-wide, many-flowered grass-pink typically does not occur on wet savannahs and bogs with pitcher plants (*Sarracenia* spp.); however, the one known population in Louisiana does have some plants coexisting with pitcher plants. This species flowers reliably after dormant-season fires, rather than growing season fires.



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Threats:

- 1) Conversion of habitat to intensively-managed pine plantations (site prep disturbance and dense tree spacing)
- 2) Fire exclusion
- 3) Residential and commercial development
- 4) Lowering of water table or other hydrologic alterations (e.g. due to ditches, dense tree spacing, etc.)
- 5) Exotic species such as cogon grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) may take advantage of disturbances to gain a foothold in pine savannah habitat



Beneficial management practices:

- 1) Thinning, targeting for removal off-site species such as loblolly and slash pines
- 2) Include dormant season (Jan.-early March) prescribed burns in habitat management
- 3) Refrain from creating drainage ditches and plowed fire lines in habitat (prepare fire lines by hand)
- 4) Minimize soil disturbances that free up growing space for exotics; clean logging equipment prior to entering sites for harvesting to avoid introducing exotics
- 5) Monitor for and treat cogon grass and other exotic plant infestations



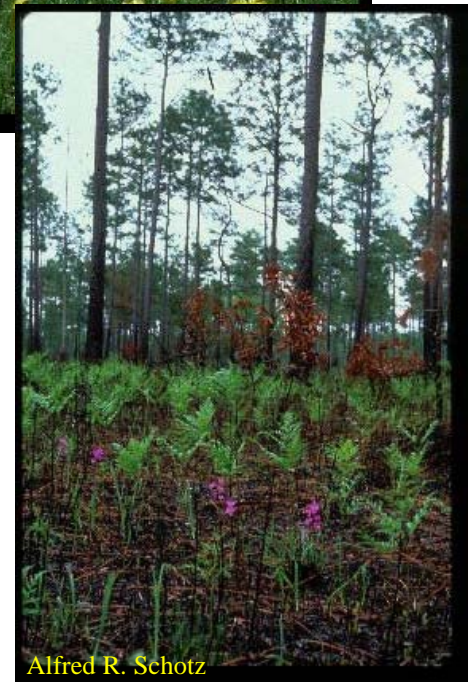
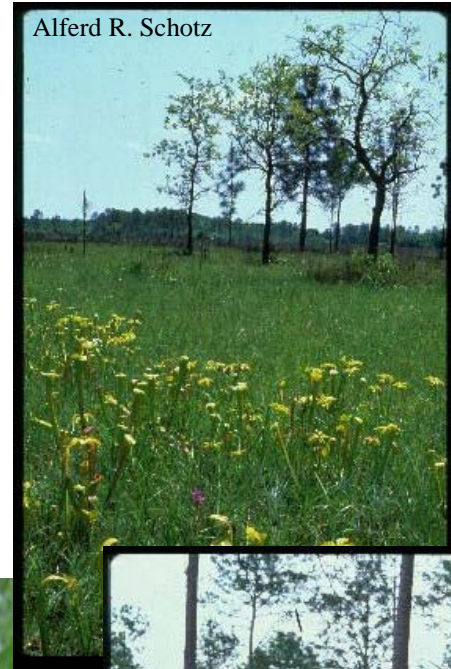
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Top right: Habitat at Lake Ramsay Savannah WMA, St. Tammany Parish, where some many-flowered grass-pink plants are associated with pitcher plants. Note higher ridge in background with blackjack oak.

Bottom right: Recently burned pine flatwoods with many-flowered grass-pink. The abundant fern is bracken fern which indicates well-drained soil. Many-flowered grass-pink is often flowering shortly after a burn when many other plants are just becoming evident vegetatively.

Below: Many-flowered grass-pink at Lake Ramsay Savannah WMA. Note purple stem.



References:

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